



Session participants tour a materials testing laboratory at the INL Research Center (IRC) during their visit to Idaho National Laboratory facilities.

## ATR User Facility first Summer Session opens in Idaho Falls

*A waiting list of researchers with experiments will be a sign of success*

Some 40 attendees of the first Advanced Test Reactor National Scientific User Facility Summer Session were told they were among the most important investments being made in commercial nuclear power development in this country.

"With all the investments and developments we're trying to make in the Idaho National Laboratory, one of the most important is the human factor, the intellectual investment of the university community and the research community--not just at INL or in the DOE complex, but the research community in universities and industries across our country," said Shane Johnson, U.S. Department of Energy Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Nuclear Energy.

Johnson spoke at the opening session of the week-long ATR NSUF Summer Session hosted by Idaho National Laboratory June 16-20. The Summer Session was attended by selected university faculty and students and industry representatives.

During the week, they attended lectures and seminars on topics ranging from "How an investigator conducts reactor experiments," and corrosion and radiation damage basics, to "Conducting an integrated experimental/modeling program" and post-irradiation examination techniques. Attendees also toured many of the research facilities at INL, including the Advanced Test Reactor, post-irradiation examination facilities and materials testing laboratories.

Guest lecturers came from a number of universities, DOE national laboratories and the Electric Power Research Institute that represented the commercial nuclear energy sector.

Johnson said the ATR NSUF, established in April 2007, "is a very important facility for the Office of Nuclear Energy. One of the challenges we made to INL and Battelle Energy Alliance (the INL managing contractor) was to throw out the red carpet, put out the word 'we're open for business,' and welcome the industrial and university communities of the U.S. here to do research (to promote and develop the renaissance of nuclear power)."

One of the signs of the success of establishing the ATR NSUF, Johnson suggested, is creating a list of researchers wanting to get to use the Advanced Test Reactor and post-irradiation examination (PIE) facilities.

"One of my goals is to oversubscribe the usage of that facility," Johnson said. "What I'd like to see more than anything else is a waiting list for people trying to get an experiment in the facility. I think we will be successful in doing that."

DOE-Idaho Operations deputy manager Ray Furstenau said making the ATR a user facility was a defining moment for the reactor.

"We wanted to develop nuclear research and development in this country," Furstenau said. "We had the ATR -- the premier test reactor in the country--but we wanted to offer the total package. It doesn't do you a lot of good to put something into the reactor and 'cook it for a while' if you don't have any place to take it for examination. That's what INL has to offer, the full package, testing capabilities and post-irradiation examination capabilities."

The PIE capabilities have been enhanced with \$15 million of funding from DOE to purchase new equipment "to complement the irradiation capabilities at INL," Johnson said. "It's all part of the grand plan of making INL a true world-class nuclear science technology laboratory."

"The summer session is important because it lets people like you know what the NSUF has to offer, and you can help get the word out," Furstenau said. "We want you to leave this summer session with a better understanding of how our ATR User Facility can help research."

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